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Advancement of women

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter dated 9 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement issued on 8 June 2008 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba relating to the recent publication of the annual report of the United States Department of State on trafficking in persons (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly under the following items:

- Item 63: Advancement of women
- Item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children
- Item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 9 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba

On 4 June 2008, the United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, presented the annual report for 2008 on trafficking in persons, in which, for the sixth consecutive year, the Government of the United States included Cuba on the list of countries accused of not making significant efforts to eliminate so-called internal trafficking in children and women for sexual exploitation, and described our country as a destination for sexual tourism, among other grave and totally unfounded accusations.

For the first time, the imperial Power also decided to include in the report a number of recommendations to the Cuban Government on how to tackle that phenomenon.

The report also threatened to impose sanctions on countries accused of not complying with the standards set by the Secretary of State on this issue, depriving them of assistance from the Government of the United States — something which, for Cuba, has not the slightest relevance, it having been subjected for nearly half a century to that and other measures forming part of the endless litany of the blockade, a policy applied with full rigour and cruelty in an attempt to crush the spirit of the Cuban people.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs vehemently rejects the contents of this new report of the Department of State, which overlooks and distorts the real situation in Cuba in its efforts to justify the criminal policy of blockade, aggression and hostility pursued by the Government of the United States against Cuba.

The report seeks to belittle the social and moral achievements of the Cuban Revolution, especially the priority given to the care of women and children, which has been widely acknowledged at the international level. It is also aimed at discrediting our healthy and thriving tourist industry, which is totally denied access to the United States market and which the report seeks to undermine by every possible means.

The Government of the United States, and in particular the Bush Administration, whose policy is permanently targeted at the human rights of the Cuban people, has no moral authority or credibility to accuse Cuba, much less to put forth cynical recommendations as to what our country is supposed to do on this issue.

Cuba attaches no value whatsoever to the contents of the report of the Department of State, aware that, thanks only to the achievements of the Revolution and despite the policy of the United States, it has been able, since 1959, to raise the social well-being of its people to unprecedented levels.

The attempt to cloud Cuba's image and that of its tourist industry, and to ignore the steadfast policy developed by the Cuban Government to prevent any kind of social ills in this sector and to punish severely those responsible for such

reprehensible conduct, can be explained only by the obsession of the United States Government with ignoring and trying to hamper everything that represents progress for our country and for its economy and society.

It was precisely the Revolution that eliminated once and for all the conditions conducive to sexual tourism and other associated ills, which had existed in our country and were aggravated by the neo-colonial rule imposed on Cuba up to 1959 by Yankee imperialism.

The United States Government has a lot to do in its own country in order to tackle the rampant phenomena of prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labour and trafficking in persons.

It is light years away from the guarantees that Cuba provides for its citizens, especially children, women and the elderly, in the areas of health, education, security and social well-being.

The United States Government has much to learn from Cuba and is in no position to lecture anyone.

Havana, 8 June 2008